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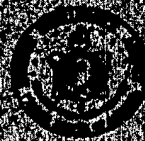
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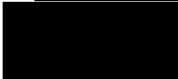
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Iraq: Kurdish Dissident Forces

There are no reliable data on Kurdish strength. The groups exaggerate their numbers and include part-time warriors to enhance their influence. Some fighters appear to serve as militiamen, participating only when personal circumstances, party needs, and availability of arms permit.

Several major Kurdish dissident groups—including Mas'ud Barzani's Kurdish Democratic Party and Jalal Talabani's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan—probably controlled forces of as many as 17,000 men during the late 1980s, and they may have mustered more forces for the current uprising. Baghdad's ruthless campaign in the fall and winter of 1988-89 almost certainly destroyed significant numbers of the Kurdish forces, but its current weakness and the success of the uprising probably have prompted many Kurds to join the revolt. The availability of captured arms, deserters, and new recruits probably has enabled Barzani and Talabani to marshal forces as strong as or stronger than those they commanded during the 1980s. The defection of at least five border guard units and probably some local security elements to the Kurdish side are also tilting the current balance in their favor.



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